Research Skills
Library home page: http://huntertafe.libguides.com/libraries

What are you trying to find out?

It is important to start with a clear idea of what information you are trying to find.
It helps to turn it into a question.
Example: What is a composite wound dressing and what are the benefits and risks of using them?

Identify key terms and concepts

Firstly identify your key terms and concepts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>composite wound dressing</td>
<td>benefits</td>
<td>risks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next identify alternative terms for each concept you have identified.
Consider:
- Plural/singular forms eg designer, designers
- Spelling variations eg colour, color
- Synonyms eg mobile phone, cell phone
- Variations of a word eg architect, architecture, architectural
- Acronyms eg NSW, New South Wales

Alternative terms:

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<td>risks</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWD’s</td>
<td>advantages</td>
<td>disadvantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>island dressing</td>
<td>positives</td>
<td>negatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ideas for alternative terms – Thesaurus, subject headings of your results, CINAHL subject headings.

Decide where to look

**Books & EBooks** – For fundamental concepts, theories and background facts.

**Online Journal databases** – For the latest academic and peer reviewed research.

**Specialist databases** – ie. Mimms Online – has only drug information.

**Internet** – General information, government information, regulations or statistics.
Searching strategies

**AND** helps to **narrow** your search because the result must include both search terms.

**OR** helps to **expand** your search because the result can include either terms or both terms in one document.

**NOT** lets you **exclude** a term. For example you want to search for the animal mouse not the computer device.

Groups words **together**. For example by placing “**Hand Hygiene**” in quotation marks it will search for Hand Hygiene together instead of Hand and Hygiene separately anywhere in the document.

Allows you to use **truncation**. If you search comput* you are also searching the following terms compute computers computing computation computations computational

**TIPs:**
- Don’t use small words in your search as the computer will usually ignore them. Ex. A, as, on, at, is.
- Limit to full text,
- The last 5-10 years,
- English.

Searching using AND, OR & NOT https://youtu.be/bCAULDuMcs0
Searching using Phrase & Truncation  https://youtu.be/Ed7EswnEbM